

UPCOMING
DISCUSSIONS

Bring a
Lunch

English Creek

Discussion Date: 4-10-10

Bel Canto

Discussion Date: 5-1-10

Sail Ho!

Adult Summer Reading Club

May 24 – July 24



Out Stealing Horses

Discussion Date: 8-14-10

March

Discussion Date: 10-16-10

Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie
Society

Discussion Date: 11-6-10

Galileo's Daughter

Discussion Date: 11-27-10

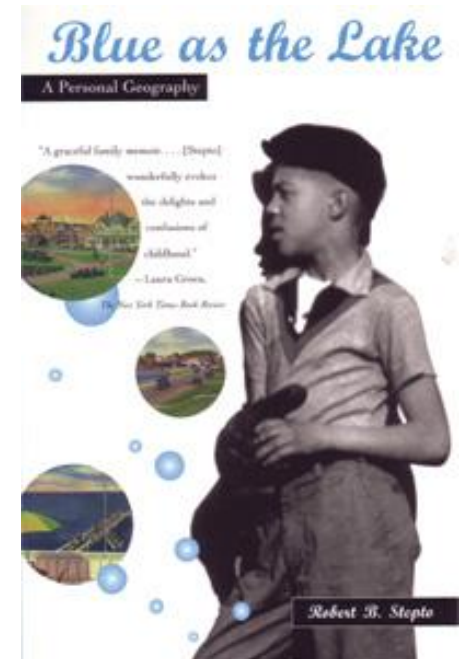
Those Who Saved Us

Discussion Date: 12-18-10

**Brown Bag
Book Club**



Digs in & Discusses



Saturday, March 20, 2010

Noon – 2pm

Activity Room

Lodi Public Library

201 W. Locust St.

Call 333-5503 for more information

Discussion Questions courtesy of

Discussion Guide designed by
Sandy Smith, Lodi Public Library

Books courtesy of
the Book Club in Box program
sponsored by the 49-99 Library System



Kirkus Reviews 1998 July #2

A memoir by an African-American college professor (English and Afro-American Studies/Yale) that is a both a summertime boyhood idyll and a jarring coming-of-age tale. The Stepto family is headed by a well-to-do obstetrician father and is well-grounded in American upper-middle-class values acquired at Spellman College. And nothing is more normal and American than the vivid descriptions of the all-black Great Lakes resort of Idlewild, Mich., where they spend their summers. The conflicts between the quieter, more conservative older generation and their kids, who engage in some dangerous lakeside showboating (recklessly driving yachts), will sound familiar to many readers whose family had a summer place. Much of this memoir is a warm and nostalgic reverie, boy-into-man stuff: there's the first girlfriend and frantic petting by the lake, a summer fling with an out-of-town girl that peters out in the mail "by Thanksgiving." At the end of every season the house is boarded up, and the author makes us feel the preciousness of these endless childhood summers when the vacation house is eventually sold (along with his father's dream of retiring in Idlewild). Summers felt more endless as the author's family forced him to read for hours each day. When his friend Mike came over and rejected games to enjoy all the reading material, Stepto's family nodded approvingly and believed that "thanks to Mike, the race's fate was in good hands." Race emerges as a significant theme, as the author is too black for white racists (like

the ones who refuse to serve his boy scout troop in a restaurant) and too light-skinned for some blacks. Visiting his former home in South Chicago brings back memories of playing stickball. At one game a bully wouldn't pick him, teasing him about being too white. Stepto is too proud to pass, like one of his relatives did, and this memoir rebuilds a rock-solid island in the past that he can retreat to whenever being African-American feels like too much of a conundrum.

PW Reviews 1998 July #4

Website:

<http://www.publishersweekly.com>

Through loosely linked, informal essays Stepto, a professor of English and Afro-American studies at Yale, traces his own past through his family's history and migrations. Starting with his childhood in the Washington Park and Woodlawn sections of Chicago and his family's summer cottage in Idlewild, a black resort on Lake Michigan, Stepto re-creates his comfortable, middle-class childhood and mourns the changes that have made it dangerous for him now to walk the streets that once gave his life form and substance. The essays in the second section tell compelling stories about individual members of his multiracial family, including jazz legend Coleman Hawkins. But they also tell about the diversity of memory, as when he describes differing family legends of how his paternal grandparents met and married. Stepto lets his material speak for itself; his difficult

relationship with his father is summed up in a description of a family photo, in which they "are up against a wall." The writing is often pure elegy, e.g., when he recalls Hawkins's father "ending his life by walking into the Missouri River one frosty February morning, his pipe still lit and glowing as he fiercely waded deeper and deeper tired, so tired of being a shipping clerk at American Electrical and a 'credit to his race' (as reported in the obituary), and maybe tired of his family, too." Only the final essay, with its cranky observations about black youth culture and the marketing of black images on Martha's Vineyard, falls short of the elegance of the other pieces. Overall, though, these evocative meditations on home and family are thoughtful and moving.

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